WORKERS OF THE WORLD. UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class mail matter, November 28, 1928 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

VOLUME IV, NO. 35 [WHOLE NO. 94] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1931 PRICE 5 CENTS

The N.Y. 'Dynamite Plot'

Marine Union Supports Defendants

The defense of Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer, indicted and facing long prison terms in the New York "dynamite plot", was put squarely before the working class as a labor case by the action taken at last Sunday's meeting of the Independent Tidewater Boatmen's Union. At this meeting of the union, of which Soderberg is secretary and the other two defendants are members, a resolution was adopted to stand on the basis of the statement sent from prison by the three members and to defend them against the frameup. The meeting endorsed the actions taken by the Marine Workers' Defense Committee to defend the brothers in prison and pledged full cooperation and support in the work until the prisoners are freed. Carter Hudson, a member of the Executive Board of the union, is the chairman of the defense Committee. The meeting at which the resolution was adopted was presided over by John Stoat, president of the organization.

The work of defense of the frame-up marine workers registered progress all along the line during the past week. The defense committee formed at the request of the defendants held a meeting Wednesday, December 2 at the office of **Il Martello,** 82 East 10th Street, where temporary headquarters of the committee have been established. The meeting adopted a program of systematic activity in behalf of the arrested marine workers and decided to broaden its membership to include representatives of all tendencies in the labor movement willing to cooperate on this issue of common interest and concern to the whole working class movement. The secretary of the committee, Carlo Tresca, was authorized to send invitations to cooperate in the work of the committee to the Communist Party, I. W. W., Conference for Progressive Labor Action, Socialist Party, I. L. D., Road to Freedom Group, and to various trade unions sympathetic to the defense.

The meeting decided to issue the statement of the committee on the case, which has already been sent out in mimeograph form, as a four page leaflet for wide distribution. It was also decided to hold a public mass meeting around the first of the year with representative speakers.

The first public discussion of the case occurred at the Labor Temple last Friday night when James P. Cannon spoke on "The New York 'Dynamite Plot'—a *conspiracy against union organization in* the New York Harbor", under the auspices of the Communist League. Comrade Cannon spoke on the same theme again on Sunday night before the I. W. W. forum. In each case the audience responded warmly to the appeal and pledged solidarity and support to the prisoners in their fight against the frame-up.

Left Opposition Holds First Public Marine Defense Meet

Workers representing various sections of the labor movement—marine workers, members of the I. W. W. and Communist Party members, etc.—were present at the Friday evening Forum of the New York branch of the Communist League to hear comrade James Cannon tell the facts concerning the "Dynamite Plot" in the N. Y. Harbor. After reviewing the various dynamite plants and frame-ups in labor history, in which the labor movement has taken a traditional stand of solidarity with the victims of the ruling class, he expressed surprise and indignation that the latest dynamite frame-up had as yet not brought out the complete working class defense that is needed.

Because of the failure of the Communist party and I. L. D. to take up the defense of the jailed victims—Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer—the Communist League of America (Opposition) had, in collaboration with Carlo Tresca, formed a defense committee which will see that the men get a working class defense.

An appeal for solidarity of the entire labor movement on behalf of the arrested men was called for. Next Friday evening, Dec. 11, at the Labor Temple, 2nd Ave. & 14th Street, comrade Cannon will continue his series of lectures on the viewpoint of the Left Opposition on the labor and political field.

URGENT!

Help The Militant

We are endeavoring to hang on with the **Weekly Militant** from week to week until a wider response is obtained to maintain **The Militant.** It is impossible, however, to say how much longer **The Militant** can continue its weekly issuance. We again call upon our supporters and sympathizers to increase their financial support of our press.

The importance of the **Weekly Militant** is keenly felt by our supporters. This is evidenced from the excerpts of a letter from a Minneapolis comrade and is typical of many received from various parts of the country.

" ' ' ' I realize **The Militant** is in urgent needs of funds. The thought that **The Militant** may be forced to go back to a semi-monthly basis is not a pleasant one, as in my opinion it is the only paper available to the American workers that gives a true Marxian analysis on the events of international importance and is of particular value to the revolutionary vanguard of the English-speaking proletariat.

"I will endeavor to have my subscription paid up by the 15th of this month. (I am one of the ten or more millions unemployed) and will also approach those friends of mine who are fortunate enough to be employed and who I think could be persuaded to support a revolutionary paper."

"Hoping for the continued publication of **The Militant** as a weekly, as well as for the success of the Left Opposition, I remain.

Comradely yours,
WILLIAM CURRAN

This is the spirit and understanding that have made it possible to build our organization, the Communist League and steadily to expand its field of activities. Further and immediate expansion is again necessary, among which is the Opposition drive for the issuance of a **Jewish** and a **Greek** paper, following closely upon the succesful start of the youth paper, **Young Spartacus.**

The Militant is the central point of activity and direction of the Left Opposition. By all means the **Weekly Militant** must be maintained. Will you assist? TODAY! Send all funds to:

THE MILITANT
84 East 10th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Railroads in Wage Cut Drive

Mobilize Railroad Workers in Struggle for Six Hour Day

Eastern Railway presidents and the leaders of the four Brotherhood unions held a four day conference in New York during the last week of November. A deadlock on all important questions was the immediate outcome, neither group offering at the time to accept the other's proposals. The Railroad Executives received a report of the conferences on November 24, but decided to defer further action until after Dec. 8, when 1,500 Railway Labor Union heads are to meet in Chicago to receive official reports on the New York conferences, and to take up the entire railroad situation. The employers had demanded that the railroad workers voluntarily accept a 10% wage cut, and thus avoid the necessity for them to resort to action under the Railway Labor Act which would delay a decision for at least a year. The heads of the Brotherhoods, on the other hand, proposed their plans for the stabilization and increase of employment. Presumably nothing was settled at these drawn-out conferences, but in reality the railroad owners emerged victorious. Despite the failure to receive a ready consent from the Brotherhood leaders, the Railway employers are confident of enforcing at least a 10% wage cut, and feel that they will shortly have the support and agreement of the Brotherhood heads for this immediate objective.

The Wage Cuts Begin

The train service employees of the Georgia & Florida Railroad have already accepted a 10% cut beginning December 1. The publication, **Business Week** (12-2-31), remarks that "it is significant that this agreement was approved by the grand officers of the Big Four brotherhoods." The railway bosses cannot but regard this as a precedent and forerunner of national railroad labor policy and are proceeding acordingly.

The Chicago and North Western Railway, one of the largest roads, on Dec. 1 proposed that its union employees accept a voluntary 15% cut; other western railrads are expected to make similar demands in the next few days. Union officials were scheduled to meet in Chicago on Dec. 8 to take up the entire railroad situation. No comment as yet has been made by the union leaders on the C. & N. W. Railway proposals. On this road there prevails the B. & O. plan, that is, between the railroads and the union employees, which in every instance, where it has been introduced, has devitalized or destroyed the character and militancy of genuine labor unionism.

On all fundamental issues involving the very existence and standards of the railroad workers, both the employed and unemployed, the Eastern Railroad owners, expressing themselves publicly through Daniel Willard, President of the Baltimore & Ohio, took a stone-like stand. Theirs was an attitude that contemplated a wreck and destruction of what remains of the railroad unions and their hard-earned rights and gains, unless the railroad workers will be able to wage an effective struggle for their maintenance.

Bosses Sharply Reject Six Hour Day

To the proposal of union labor for a six hour day as a partial remedy for unemployment in the railroad industry, the Railway Executives categorically replied:

"We have found ourselves **unable to accept** your conclusion that the **six hour day** is necessary and that it must be instituted in order to absorb the existing number of experienced employees without reduced compensation." Consequently, contines President Willard's letter, "we would be unwilling to recommend the appointment of a commission to determine the ways and means of applying this principle to the different classes of employees."

This declaration is plain, hard and challenging: labor shall receive no concessions; the matter can not any longer even be discussed (not even another of those long, drawn-out investigation commissions which always produce nothing for the workers). This stand of the employers in the six hour day is a direct challenge to the very existence of what remains of union railroad labor. The struggle for the six hour day and five day week, without reduction in pay is the essence and kernel of the existence and develpoment of militant unionism in the railroad industry. All other issues —amalgamation of the unions, organization of the unorganized, preservation of seniority rights, alleviation of unemployment caused by extreme exploitation, the speed-up system and technological improvements — now group themselves around the central issue and struggle for the six hour day.

Six Hour Day Is Rallying

It is in the militant fight of railroad labor for the six hour day that it will be possible to arouse **all** the **railroad workers,** organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled for a united struggle against the railway bosses. Only the rank and file of the railroad workers led by the militants and Left wingers will be ready to initiate the necessary steps in preparation for railroad struggles that will begin on single roads but which will rapidly extend their scope. Upon the supine present day union leaders, they cannot rely at all to defend their interests. These misleaders of labor will "negotiate" and sell out the rank and file.

Brotherhood Heads Are the Allies of the Bosses

The railroad owners feel, and rightly so, that they have allies in the ranks of labor, that is, "the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," in this case particularly, the heads of the Brotherhoods. They expect the latter, however they plead or pretend otherwise now, employees accept the owners' demands for immediate wage cuts. The railroad owners know their union leaders. In addition, they are preparing swiftly for any eventualities, and that includes, as their foremost objective, the destruction of the what remains of unionized labor on the railroads. The railroad workers must have no doubts of that.

How supremely confident the railroad bosses are concerning the union heads, and how lightly they regard them, is put simply and bluntly by **Business Week** (12-2-31):

"There are 2 reasons why the labor executives could not accept the proposal for a voluntary cut in wages. One was that after sending men to Canada to stiffen the necks of the rail employees there in their fight against wage reduction, **they could not let them down before the Dominion arbitration board issued its findings.** The other is that, **because of the temper of the men, the labor executives—regardless of what they themselves may think about a wage cut** —want to compel the managements to carry the wage reduction proposal to the Board of Meditation **where they will show their** hand."

Preparing Sell-Out Through Board of Mediation

What could be clearer? Already a despatch from Ottawa, Canada reports that the application of the railways (for a wage cut) has been granted". The "Board of Conciliation" has acted; now the union heads will try to "conciliate" and convince the men that the wage cut must be accepted because of the "special conditions". And before the "Board of Mediation" in the United States, "they will show their hand,"—the hand of agreement with the bosses' demands.

All the other negotiations and discussions that took place at the New York conference between the Eastern Railroad Executives and the labor representatives, loom up as secondary beside the hard-boiled stand of the railroad owners for an immediate wage-cut of at least 10%. **Railway Age** (11-28-31) enters into details on the various phases of this conference. Above everything else, the reports demonstrate the **persistent demands** of the railroad bosses and the **readiness to yield** of the Brotherhood heads, whose spokesman was D. B. Robertson, president of the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen.

Conditions of Railroad

What, briefly, are the conditions prevailing among railroad workers today? More than one-third of the employees in the industry are unemployed. Only part-time employment exists for thousands of the men. The statement of railroad labor's situation and requirements, as set forth in the labor manifesto presented by the railroad unions to the Conference, says, in part:

"Thousands of train and engine service employees work only from four to eight months a year. Thousands of maintenance men (in the shops and on the right of way) are idle for a substantial part of the year. In the months of employment their wages equal only $1,000 per year."

At the same time, comparing 1910 and 1930, "the employees of today handles over 50% more traffic and **produces twice as much revenue over labor cost."** With this result of the speed-up system, the improvement of technique and the increased exploitation, the railroad owners still demand a wage cut from the employees. From the meek shall be taken. The railroad workers are being made right along to bear greater burdens so that the railroad barons may also receive dividends in times of capitalist crisis, not to mention their swollen profits of the past. Railroad increases in traffic rates which will "produce $125,000,000 more revenue from the same amount of labor" have been granted by the Interstate Commerce Commission, but the gluttons demand more off the backs of the workers.

(Continued on page 4)

The Exploitation of the New York Harbor Boatmen

Very little, if anything, has even been said about, the harbor boatmen, a branch of the Marine industry until recently, when some of us connected with the organization of these workers were arrested on a frame-up charge of dynamiting some of these old floating coffins. Very few workers even in other branches of the Marine Industry realized the extent of exploitation of the barge captains.

There are employed approximately 4,000 men in the New York harbor in this particular industry. Their wages ranged from $110.00 per month down as low as $65.00 per month. Many companies pay nothing to the captain when the boat is empty; others pay a dollar a day when light, while some pay straight wages, loaded or light. The O'Boyle Towing Co., for instance, (and incidentally the complainant in the frame-up to keep us in prison and railroad us for life) is of the "dollar a day" type. This company also has a habit of having one captain take care of 4 or 5 boats, even when these boats are loaded and waiting for consignment. When these boats are loaded, the company receives anywhere from 7 to 14 dollars per day for each boat as long as they are loaded; yet they cannot afford to have a man aboard. Due to lack of real militant organization among these workers, conditions have grown so bad that hundreds of boats today in New York harbor are being taken care of and kept floating by men who receive no pay in any shape or form while waiting for cargo. The remuneration is that of being allowed to sleep on the boat and live there if they can steal, beg or borrow something to live on.

Miserable and Degrading Living Conditions

What are the living conditions on these boats? Take the boat on which William Trajer, one of the defendants, was employed. Trajer, an active and militant union man, had been out of work for months due to his union activities, when he got this job. Naturally he had no money and the only clothes he possessed were those he wore. He came abroad this boat and found a cabin—dark, foul-smelling and overridden with bed bugs and roaches. The total furnishing of that hole consisted of one stove, one table and one soap box that was used for a chair—no bed, no blankets, no cooking utensils. He slept on the damp floor. He went out and begged a coffee pot and some coffee to put in it.

His pay day was 15 days off and in the meantime he was compelled to beg from other captains—a loaf of bread here, a little coffee there, a few potatoes somewhere else and so forth. The experiences of Trajer are typical of all the rest. Sanitary conditions there are none. When a bath is needed, it is taken by using a pail of river water—if you have the pail. The cabin is the dining-room, bed-room, bath-room, toilet or what have you.

On the majority of these boats, captains are compelled to bring up their families. Five, six or more children is nothing unusual. What chance these children have to obtain even the most elementary education can be imagined when one takes into consideration the fact that the boat moves from—say Port Reading today to Harlem River, from Harlem River next day to Perth Amboy and so on. Naturally the children cannot attend school under these conditions, as the pay is not enough to allow the captain to rent a place ashore for the wife and children so that the latter may attend school. The result can be imagined. The child is born on the river, grows up on the river and dies on the river. The only education such a child gets is to become an expert boat captain when he is grown up and to serve the boss well for little or no pay. The life of a boat captain's girl is to grow up and become a good boat captain's wife and in turn help produce some more prospective boat captains and boat captain's wives. Born in misery. Live in unbelievable misery and poverty. Die in misery, poverty and suffering. That is the outlook and life for these members of our class.

The working conditions on these boats are on a par with all other conditions in the industry. No 8-hour day here. No over-time pay. No regular house at any time. Load the boat in the daytime and tow up the canal at night time. A boat captain is expected to be on the boat at all hours and be ready when the tow boat blows the whistle to get out and "make the tow". Failure to be aboard means he misses his boat, which never fails to mean that he also has missed his job. And when his job is gone, his "home" is gone too, because that dirty, foul-smelling and dark cabin was the only home he possessed, and he possesses it just so long as the boss allowed him and no longer. A captain is expected to be everything from a deck hand to an authority on naval architecture. If the boat leaks too much, he is expected to get down there and stop the leak. But if he wants to keep his job, he had better not present a bill to the company for materials bought to repair that leak. He is expected to always keep the boat painted and in trim, but can't ask for more than a gallon of paint every year or so, or he is accused of selling the paint.

Men and women are compelled to live for years under conditions described back to their floating coffins called boats. means of escaping this degrading and miserable life where the most elementary principles of decency and human rights are denied them. There was no escape. Nowhere to go. There remained but one way—to **Organize.**

The Union Is Formed

The union was formed. It had its flood and its ebb. Up and down. A struggle with the bosses or their hirelings. Struggle against ignorance, bred and fostered through the living conditions and general environment. Step by step these things were overcome, but a struggle at every step. The union gradually grew. It grew into fighting form. It hit back. Won a few concessions but after a while lost them again. Men went back to their fleating coffins called boats, some disillusioned, some with all the fight taken out of them; others seemed not to care any more and the bosses, especially the type of O'Boyle and Hourahan, took advantage of this situation and slashed the wages still more.

But there was a small body of men who had not yet given up hope. A small bdoy of men that realized that we could only regain our lost ground by again organizing, and organizing in such a way that when the time came we would be ready to fight; we would stop the retreat. From defense we would take the offensive. The union came to life again. It gradually grew. Already one of the companies was listening to the rumbling undercurrent of revolt among its captains and decided to recognize the union and hire nothing but union men and hire them out of the union hall. Another

(Continued on page 2)

Our National Tour

The National Tour of comrade Arne Swabeck is proceeding well. Full reports will be given in the next issue of **The Militant.** The remainder of the schedule follows:

Springfield, Ill.	Dec. 14.
St. Louis, Mo.	Dec. 15, 16.
Kansas City, Mo.	Dec. 18, 19, 20.
Minneapolis, Minn.	Dec. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.
Chicago, Ill.	Dec. 31 and January 1st
Youngstown, Ohio	January 3
Cleveland, Ohio	January 4, 5.
Philadelphia, Pa.	January 10.

★ ★

» OPEN FORUM «

Current Events

CANADIAN COMMUNIST TRIAL
WALKER AND MOONEY
RAILROAD WAGE CUTS

Friday, December 11, 1931

Lecture by
JAMES P. CANNON
at the
Labor Temple
14th Street and Second Avenue

QUESTIONS and **DISCUSSION**
ADMISSION: 25 Cents
Unemployed Workers Admitted Free
Auspices: New York Branch Communist League of America (Opposition)

THE ECONOMIC MONTH

The tenative signs of business recovery which began to appear in October, following a temporary inflationist policy of the Federal Reserve banks, have been practically eliminated. Wheat, silver and crude oil have gone back in price toward the low points reached in the first week of October. Steel production, which reached as high as 32% of capacity a few weeks ago, is now back to 29%. Automobile production for October amounted to 80,142 cars and trucks, or about the average monthly production for 1915. Bankruptcies for October totalled 2,362, compared with 1,936 in September and 2,124 in October, 1930. Railroad car-loadings for the week of Nov. 21 amounted to 653,000 cars, against 779,000 in the corresponding week of last year.

In answer to a questionnaire addressed to several hundred bankers, about 79% said they did ont expect a recovery in business before next Spring, about 21% not before next Fall. Another round of wage-cuts is in prospect, as capitalism knows no other way out of its immediate crisis than a vicious assault on the standards of living of the working class.

* * * *

That capitalism is today a retrogressive instead of a progressive force is illustrated by the dispute now going on between a group of associations of Brazilian planters and the Brazilian government. The government wants to destroy 12 millions bags of coffee, all picked, transported, packed, and ready to ship; the growers are holding out for 18 million bags. We can be sure that the large plantation-owners will be properly **compensated by the government in any case.**

* * * *

Sterling exchange reached a new low of $3.25 to the pound this week, the lowest since the pound went off the gold standard and within a few cents of the all-time low of $3.14 reached in 1920 before the "stabilization" In August the MacDonalds and Snowdens were clamoring for reductions in the dole and in the wages of civil servants, painting dismal pictures of the downfall of British imperialism if the pound should collapse. Now they are jubilant over the increased stimulation to industrial activity caused by the depreciation of the pound. British iron and steel production went up in October, compared to September, the first time in six months that any improvement has been shown. Pig iron production gained from 248,000 tons in September to 284,000 tons in October, and exports of iron and steel from 139,200 tons to 158,800 tons.

Meantime the question of wages, salaries and the amount of the dole is becoming more and more acute. From September 18, just before the abandonment of the gold standard, to Nov. 11, the general level of prices in England went up 10%, the prices of primary products 19%. Any worker who received the same amount of pounds for his week's work got in effect a 10% cut in wages. On top of this the National Laborites insisted only a few weeks ago that the abandonment of the gold standard would not make any difference to prices of goods in England, and MacDoald during the election campaign said that the 10% cut in the dole had been such a costly victory that it must be retained no matter what happens.

The rising prices will bring the question of economic class struggles to the forefront in the very near future, and

(Continued on page 2)

For the 6 Hour Day-No Pay Reduction

The Importance of the Struggle for the Shorter Work Day

The motion within the working class caused by the present crisis is a forerunner to impeding historic changes. In such a situation it is the duty and task of the Communist to point out the road and lead the way. But once again we find the revisionists within our ranks, the Stalinites, pointing out the road, first of adventure and then of opportunism. This contradictory swing from one extreme to the other is most glaring in the unemployment activity. To the Browders, Johnstones and the district organizers throughout the counrty, the six hour day slogan is counter-revolutionary, and a new name for the stagger-system.

We present some facts for the comrades. Our literature and propaganda must be so conducted that we never lose sight of our goal, which we must constantly point out to the working class. The party in its Right swing has left this by the wayside, and only now and then in a mechanical way does one find party functionaries presenting the revolutionary conclusions. When a Communist party presents a string of immediate demands for unemployment activity and does not connect them with the ultimate aim, it is a serious situation; to fail to select the DETERMINING connenting link between the present class relationships and our goal is to blunt our weapons and sidetrack our movement into an opportunist swamp, no matter how loudly we proclaim our support of the Soviet Union, etc.

Immediate demands, without proper connection with the revolutionary conclusion are of no value, and are of great harm to the Communist movement. But even if we properly connect the immediate demands to the goal, but fail to pick out the determining slogans in a given situation we also, "lag dangerously behind the task of organizing a widespread movement of the unemployed." In the resolution of the Central Committee of the party (**Daily Worker** 11-28-31) the American bureaucrats list one central unifying slogan: Unemployment Insurance at full wages, a slogan with 29 words. They then present seven main national slogans, which include everything, free rent, gas, light, water and immediate, extensive public work at trade union wages, and the seven hour day.

This is worse than the New York election program which was a local affair, while this is a national directive for the whole American working class. To these main slogans, the resolution adds, "It is necessary to raise local demands in the various localities."

The Main Slogans

The party does not present to the workers one, two or three short, snappy slogans as the MAIN DETERMINING slogans for our class in the present situation; this is vitally necessary. In my estimation the three outstanding slogans to be given national prominence are: The Six Hour day, the five day week with no reduction in pay, and Immediate Relief and Social Insurance (Not Social Insurance BILL). The last two have been dealt with by the party; I devote myself to the importance of the reduction of hours struggle.

Every worker with ordinary sense is for the reduction of his hours of toil. But the problem does not stop here. Some are working 12 hours, others 10 and some 8 hours. What should be the slogan for this variation? Before the worker will jump, he will want to know if he will receive less pay, because what he makes now by working from 8 to 12 hours is not enough, and if he gets less, he just can't get by. The slogan for a six hour day does not imply 6 hours of work for every worker in the country at once, no matter how we would desire such. It means as, (for example, the 8 hour movement of the '80s) that this slogan rallies the greatest class forces in organized opposition to the capitalists, and where our pressure is the strongest, forces a reduction of hours.

If we look back at the history of our own pages of struggle, we can understand the powerful movements organized around the 10 hour struggle of the '30s and the 8 hour struggle in the '80s. Today, American industry has reached a stage rotten ripe for the struggle for the 6 hour day. The American workers of today must continue the heroic examples of the proletariat before us. The historic trend has witnessed the reduction of hours as a national outcome of the class struggle, and with it has developed the intensification of their exploitation. You cannot have your choice. If you "refuse" the reduction of hours today—the speed-up of labor will proceed full speed anyway.

The Importance of the Struggle To Reduce Working Hours

Its form may be altered somewhat, but it would be the same speed-up we all know so well. The class conscious worker knows the positive effect powerful unions and successful strikes have on real wages and the standard of living. But in spite of this constant struggle, real wages show little change, that is, the working class in the past and now receive an average wage that is equal to the minimum subsistence level. This is no argument against the struggle for these immediate demands, but it is a powerful argument against those who think they can gain their objective through immediate demands as well as those who lose sight of the revolutionary goal. On the other hand, the above shows the futility of the social reformist struggle for immediate demands alone, but on the other hand it does not substantiate the "ultra-Leftists" who are against all immediate demands. Immediate demands are the links for the vanguard and the class. What kind of immediate demands, how they are formulated and fought for, is the decisive factor. The slogans the Central Committee of the Party presents for unemployment activity fall short of this test.

The struggle for the reduction of hours is only dragged in by the tail as an additional slogan, and is wrongly formulated at that. If it were possible to add one more hour of work per day to every employed worker, the resulting reaction, in addition to increased unemployment, would be a reduction of pay and less workers doing more work. The problem is stated wrong when one says a low hourly wage rate brings long hours—it is industries with long hours that bring in low hourly rates. On the other hand, if the workers through struggle are able to reduce the hours of toil in decisive sections of industry throughout the country, the reaction would be more workers employed and a tendency toward a rise in wages. The reduction of hours from sum-up to sundown to the present standard has not been accompanied by a proportionate reduction in wages. On the contrary, the reduction of hours through working class struggle has witnessed an increase in wages.

Reduction of Hours Is Strong Blow Against the Bosses

Considering the three overlapping factors; reduction of hours, social insurance and immediate relief for the unemployed the one that will hit the bosses the hardest is the reduction of hours. The reduction of hours hits on the source of profits, at surplus value by reducing the hours of surplus labor-time. Further, of the three, it will lay the basis for greater contradictions for capitalism once a reduction of hours is achieved. Neither immediate relief in the form of government funds, charity or social insurance will cause capitalism as many contradictions as the reduction of hours. At the same time, it is a powerful lever to unite the employed and unemployed, a weak side of the present unemployed movement; and enable the Communist vanguard to build a more durable and stable. organizational structure through the united front tactic, which in turn can be used more effectively for the other two points—immediate relief and social insurance. In other wordsd, it is not a matter of a struggle for the reduction of hours first, and the others later, or the sidetracking of the other two factors. It is a question, not only which has the most propaganda value today, social insurance, immediate relief or the reduction of hours, but a question of how to coordinate the three factors, laying a strong organizational basis as we go along and at the same time finding the determining connecting link of the present class relations and our revolutionary goal. The reduction of hours struggle, concretized by the slogan of the Six Hour day, the five day week and no reduction of pay is the fourfold factor.

The hopeless bureaucrat immediately says. Isn't it true that many capitalists and reformers are for the six hour day, and do not Green and the rest of the fakers say the same? He draws the conclusion that it must be counter-revolutionary—particularly since the Left Opposition presented this slogan at the very start. What more evidence does anyone want?

Party Policy Makes Easier the Role of Reformists and Fakers

For every capitalist, reformer and labor faker who is for the six hour day, I can point out an equal number (without trouble) who are for social insurance and particularly a Social Insurance BILL. Further,if we count noses, we will find that the Second International, numerically greater than we Communists, also say they are against capitalism and for the socialist mode of production. The main contending classes in society are vitally interested in unemployment, but for opposite reasons. The same is true of all problems of the class struggle. Only stupid bureaucrats, non-Marxists could present such arguments, as the Centrists do.

The failure of the party to lead in the struggle for the Six Hour day, the five day week and no reduction of pay and the organizational weakness of the Communist League to transform this correct theoretical analysis into practice has resulted in allowing the social reformists and reformers to obtain the lead. They are making hay while the sun shines, because they know the impasse America is in with her tremendous machine development and the absolute decrease in the number of workers, in production. American Imperialism, in order not to allow the basic contradiction of her capitalist system to mature, is forced to prevent such by taking steps and measure which are in themselves contradictions, and in turn pave the way for an enlargement of the basic contradiction she is hopelessly trying to sidestep. A powerful class movement of the workers for the reduction of hours can hasten this contradiction upon capitalism, creating a condition where we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Providing this comes about through class struggle and not through SOCIAL REFORMIST channels.

The American Stalinist leadership, with their present perspective and analysis on the unemployment question, have throw overboard the very A B C of Marxism, not only on the theoretical side, but also in elementary economics.

It is indeed time for the Communists of America to map out a program of action in all its detail for the Six Hour Day, the Five Day week with no reduction in pay.

—HUGO OEHLER.

(Supplementing comrade Oehler's valid arguments, it is necessary to add that, particularly and directly in relation to mass unemployment and efforts to relieve it, the international slogan propounded by comrade Trotsky and the Left Opposition, has the necessary strength, appeal and validity to arouse and mobilize wide masses of workers around it.

That is the slogan of **large and long-term credits to the Soviet Union,** a slogan that is applicable on an international scale, but is especially so in the United States. We have elaborated this question on previous occasions. and the official Communist Party, though in a backhanded inadequate and stupid manner, has found it necessary to finally also raise this slogan. With this additional slogan, as mentioned above, the position of the Communist League of America (Opposition) is a completely correct one.—Ed.).

Confusion among the Furriers

In my article in **The Militant** (Nov. 14, 1931) I wrote in part that the leadership of the Needle Trades Union who conceived the policy of electing a Joint Council for the Furriers under the auspices of theird cover name—Rank and File committee—will not be caught napping when the offices are refused to them by the International President, since they had their next move already worked out, namely, that the so-called newly elected joint council will invite the Industrial union to a "real" united front.

Our prediction was carried into life on Nov. 21. On this date the two "opposing" factions in the fur trade, namely the Fur department of the N. T. W. U. and the newly-born joint council of the "Furriers International", gathered in Manhattan Hall to consider ways and means to bring about one union in the fur trade.

The conference, which was scheduled to start at 7.30, began much later because not more than two dozen workers, including myself, came to listen to the negotiations. Such an attendance at a conference that was supposed to deal with the most burning problem among the furriers at present, was ample proof that the furriers are tired and disgusted with the comedy played at their expense.

Gold's Remarks

The meeting was opened by I. Cohen and in mechanical fashion Winogradsky proposed him for chairman and Beerum for secretary; the two groups were given the honor to deliver uniform speeches. Gold, who arrived late, was disappointed to find an empty hall, or maybe he did not expect any better—who knows? In his speech Gold said that they are glad to make a united front with a rank and file joint council; for unity with them means unity to better the conditions of the workers, whereas a united front with Sorkin and Winick would mean to give money to the above-named to betray the workers.

Gold evidently forgot to mention that he had made a united front with Sorkin in 1928, after both Sorkin and Winick were fully exposed as betrayers for trying to sell out the 1926 furriers' strike and by inaugurating the expulsion of the Left wing in 1927.

He also forgot that his co-workers, Potash, Boruchowitch, Winogradsky and the acting national secretary and editor of the **Needle Worker,** Henry Sazer, proposed a united front with Sorkin in March, 1931 and fought tooth and nail at the Party fraction to railroad their motion. They wanted to unite on the following basis: that Sorkin should go as a representative of the union to the next plenum of the Profintern and Winick be given a paid job as an officer. Only the stubborn fight of a group of workers in the fraction, including myself, stopped this kind of a deal.

A Protest From the Ranks

In answer to the announcement about the new headquarters to be engaged for the new council, one of our old militats, Shaffer, rose with a protest, which in reality expressed the sentiment and attitude of the bulk of the furriers in New York. He stated very definitely that this idea of opening a third union will only add more confusion to the already muddled state of affairs. Very illuminating was the reply of Jack Schneider, manager of the Fur Department of the Industrial Union to the sound objections of the old furrier. He motivated the opening of the new headquarters with the fact that many furriers who wouldn't like to come to the Industrial Union, must be provided with a different office.

Feeling the embarrassment of the situation. Winogradsky, thanks to his ingenuity, rushed forward with an absolutely harmless proposal to postpone the conference indefinitely. But this proposal does not solve the situation, nor does it diminish the confusion brought about by the mistakes of the Left wing leadership into the ranks of the Left wing furriers. Our proposals made in the pages of **The Militant** (November 14, 1931) are correct. An explanation and ackonwledgement of the mistakes in policy would help to start anew the struggle fr better conditions against the bosses and their agents of every shade.

—ROBERT BRILLIANT.

THE ECONOMIC MONTH

(Continued from page1)

offer unequalled possibilities for the Communist Party of England to broaden its influence with the masses.

* * * *

The Federal Reserve Banks are beating a hasty retreat from the policy of abnormal stimulation of rediscounts and purchase of bills in the open market, which was a necessity of their defense of the dollar against the flood of gold exports. The statement of Oct. 23 marked the peak of the inflationary movement-bills discounted and purchased totalled $1,467,000,000. The Dec. statement shows these two items at a total of $1,141,000,000. Federal Reserve note issues, however, have not declined nearly as much, from $2,478 millions to $2,383 during the same period. Money of all kinds in circulation actually showed an increase from $5,504 millions to $5,511.

The banks are still putting pressure on the bourgeoisie to liquidate the process of deflation and the strengthening of the banks is resumed, but the bourgeois reacts as best he can by holding on to his money, keeping larger and larger amounts in "circulation", that is, in hoarding. A genuine increase in note discounts and purchases would represent the beginning of a real industrial revival; the bank figures, however, indicate only a temporary financial maneuver which is now being liquidated.

* * * *

Likewise belonging to the classes of financial maneuvers are the efforts of Mr. Hoover to bring back prosperity by reorganizing the War Finance Corporation and creating a new bank for loans against home building. When in doubt, organize a bank, appears to be his motto. The Germans did the same thing after the crash of 1923-24, and again in recent weeks after the July crash. It all helps to sustain the illusion that capitalism can find some other way out of the crisis than off the backs of the working class.

* * * *

The struggle of the capitalist class to reduce the wages of railway workers is one of the outstanding phases of the attempt to solve the crisis in the capitalist way. The Tory element of the financial bourgeoisie resents even the diplomatic courtesies which the railway bosses have seen fit to employ in their negotiations with the brotherhoods so far. What they want was illustrated by the demand of Fred W. Sargent, president of the Chicago and Northwestern, for a 15% wage cut instead of 10%. He threatened that if the workers did not immediately accede to his demands, he would expose the rotten financial situation of the road, and thus bring on bankruptcy. Point was given to the threat by the receivership announced during the week for the Wabash Railroad, whose last previous receivership was in 1915.

In 1929 the railroads paid out $2,942,000,000 in wages, and made a profit of $1,275,000,000. In 1931 the wage bill be about $2,145,000,000 and the profits about $540,000,000. A 10% cut in wages, based on the 1929 payroll, would increase profitsby $294,200,000; based on the present payroll, by $215,000,000. This would be far from restoring the $735,000,000 drop in profits caused by the crisis, but when it is a question of choosing between cutting the wages of over a million and a half workers and cutting down the interest coupons of bondholders by means of a receiveship, what public-spirited railroad management would hesitate?

—B. J. F.

Perspectives of the Crisis in France

(Continued from page 3)

and in value from 34,591,000,000 francs to 30,028,000,000.

Historical Background of French Capitalism

Taking the foregoing as a cross-section of the present situation of French economy, let us trace certain lines of development backward to their historical roots.

1. French capitalism has never achieved the victory over petty peasant agriculture which was so characteristic of England, which has been carried though in Germany, and which is marked in the United States by the installation of a permanent agrarian crisis. The petty bourgeois peasant was the first beneficiary of the French Revolution, on the 4th of August, 1789, when the nobility, yielding to peasant pressure, "renounced" its feudal rights. It showed its political power under the first Bonaparte, in the Restoration, in the installation of Louis Bonaparte as president of the Second Republic, in the opposition to the Commune, and down to the present time, when it forced through an increase of 200 to 300% in the tariff on agricultural products after the 1930 break in world market prices.

Economically, it is still the dominant factor in France. The value of its annual output, estimated at 113 billions of francs, is as great as that of all other industry put together. Over half the population of France still live in rural communities.

Yet it is fundamentally insufficient and unable to compete on an open market. A tabulation of the distribution of farm holdings, classified by size, was made before the war, and while a little old, is the latest available. It should be observed that some of the larger farms are operated in small pieces by tenants, so that the process of splitting-up is even greater than that indicated.

Tables for "Perspectives of the Economic Crisis of France"

Table 1

Classification of French Farm Holdings by Size

		Number of Farms
Up to 2 1-2 acres	(-1 ha)	3,235,400
2 1-2—12 1-2 acres	(1-5 ha.)	1,829,259
12 1-2—25 acres	(5-10 ha.)	788,299
25-125 acres	(10-50 ha).	764,461
125-250 acres	(50-100 ha.)	52,048
250-500 acres	(100-200 ha.)	22,777
Over 500 acres	(200-ha.)	10,503
	Total	5,702,752

This shows that 85% of the farms of France are of 25 acres or less. Necessarily, their productivity is small—boundary strips alone reduce the average effective area, the small holding cannot afford a high degree of mechanization which involves capital investment, and Frnace is reckoned among the countries of low yields. In wheat, for example, along with the United States and Russia, its yields range from 12 to 18 bushels an acre, compared with 30 bushels or more for countries of highly-developed agricultural technique like Germany, Belgium and Holland. While wheat represents less than 20% of the farm produdction of France, it allows the possibility of international comparison.

This low level of productivity has set its stamp on the entire development of French capitalism. The small peasant, to survive,has had to adjust his standard of living to a low scale, which has been reflected in the wages of labor on an international comparison; in addition it has resulted in a domestic market of low purchasing power. Still, even the frugality, thrift and economic conservatism of the small peasant has not been enough to enable him to survive in competition with world agricultural production. He has forced through a system of high protective tariffs which protect his inefficiency.

The battle of 1848, in which English capitalism through its abolition of the tariff on agricultural products, decisively defeated English agriculture, has not even been fought in France, because of the political and economic strength of the peasant. Protected by a high tariff, French foodstuffs and consequently the French cost of living, are consistently above levels of other capitalist countries, and are now the highest in the world, with the new duties. The cost of living about the middle of 1931 was 112% of that of 1928 in France, while in Great Britain it had sunk to 90% and Germany to 91% (no matter how these figures may have been falsified by the official sources from which they are derived, the relation internationally is all that matters here).

France imports foodstuffs to the extent of about 12% of the value of its total imports; England 45%, Germany 31% At the same time, and as a result, France exports less, proportionately; its total exports are consistently about 55% of those of Great Britain. This apparent self-sufficiency, be it noted, is based on a backward agriculture and a consequently low level of industrial development, restricted to a home market which does not permit of expansion of productivity.

This constitutes a basic contradiction in French economy. The capitalist wants low food prices, a plentiful supply of proletarian labor from ex-peasants, low wages, maximum industrial output, maximum exports; the peasant wants high food prices, must have them to support his economically backward productive technique, and clings to his scrap of land, holding back to the limit of his ability the progress of industrial capitalism.

(To Be Continued)

Exploitation of the Boatmen

(Continued from page 1)

company was about to follow suit. Captains on the O'Boyle Line came back to the union. There was talk about a strike sometime in January on this line. O'Boyle officials heard of it. Others picked up their ears and suddenly realized that the union was again about to come to life and to become a factor on New York's waterfront. Something had to be done. The usual cry of "Communist" did not seem to affect the workers. Something else must be done.

The frame-up. I need not here go into details. Workers everywhere will soon know the whole story. Enough to say that three of the union's most active members, including the writer, are today about to be railroaded up the river for life for a crime we did not commit. Our crime was the crime of trying, by organization, to rectify some of the wrongs described in this article and to gain for the members of the union an equal and decent scale of wages.

If, with the assistance of the workers everywhere, the Defense Committee succeeds in defeating this attempt of a frame-up, we shall continue, no matter where we are, to commit the crime of organizing the workers against their common enemy, the boss. To conclude this article I want to repeat my statement to police captain Lennard in the station after my arrest and when told to "confess". "There was not enough money outside to buy me, there is not enough terror in here to break me." That statement goes for all three defendants.

—JACK SODERBERG.
Secretary-Treasurer of I. T. B. U.

Red Christmas Affair in N.Y.

On Christmas Eve, **December 24, 1931,** an entertainment for the benefit of **The Militant** will be given by the New York Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) at its headquarters, 84 East 10th Street. Refreshmets will be served.

The entertainments of the League have been lively and pleasing to all who have attended. Workers are cordially invited to attend the Christmas Eve affair.

MEETINGS IN STAUNTON, ILL., AND ST. LOUIS, MO., ARRANGED FOR SWABECK

STAUNTON, ILL.—On **Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1931, at 7:30 P. M.,** comrade Arne Swabeck will speak in **Staunton Ill.** at **Kolar Hall.** His subject will be: **"Unemployment, the 6 Hour Day and the Communists."** All workers are invited.

ST. LOUIS, MO.—A lecture on "Unemployment, the 6 Hour Day and the Communists" will be given by Arne Swabeck on **December 16, 1931 at 7:30 P. M.** at the **St. Louis Public Library, 14th and Olive St.** All workers are invited to attend.

KANSAS CITY MEETING FOR SWABECK

KANSAS CITY, MO.—A lecture on **"The Economic Crisis and the Communists"** will be given by Arne Swabeck in **Kansas City, Mo.,** on **Friday, December 18th, 1931** at **8 P. M.** at the **Brotherhood of Railway Clerks Hall, 223 East 9th St.** All workers are cordially invited to attend.

STUDY CLASS IN KANSAS CITY

A study class in the "Fundamentals of Communism" is being organized in Kansas City, Mo., by the Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition). The class will be conducted by comrade George Clarke. Kansas City workers who wish to join the class are requested to get in touch with comrade Clarke, at Buehler's Book Store, 220 West 12th Street.

Progress for Jewish Paper

Work for the publication of a semi-monthly paper of the Left Opposition in the Jewish language is well under way.

The New York Jewish group of the Communist League (Opposition) held a meeting on December 5th, together with a number of sympathizers and formed an organization with the aim of supporting and spreading the Jewish paper. Close to one hundred dollars was raised in cash and pledges. This group will hold its next meeting on Wedesday, December 16, 8 P. M., at 84 East 10th St. All sympathetic workers are urged to attend this meeting. Comrade Marx Engel is in charge of the work for New York.

In Minneapolis

Comrade Barach, is in charge of the work in Minneapolis; he writes: "A number of Jewish Communists are willing to actively support the Left Opposition press. Committee chosen to arrange list of names for solicitation, tag day, and party or banquet, the latter in conjunction with Swabeck's visit . . . You many expect funds to roll in very shortly". The spirit of the Minneapolis comrades is quite obvious.

Very much of the same spirit prevails in St. Louis, where comrade Goldberg is in charge of the work. He writes in part: "I was the local manager of the **Freiheit** for over four years, I know how to carry on this kind of work and you can rest assured that I will be a worker for uor semi-monthly paper."

The following comrades are in charge of the work in other localities: Boston, Eva Weiner; Chicago, J. R. Booth; Toronto, Harry Clairmont. We are now in the process of organizing our work in Montreal, Winnipeg, New Haven, Philadelphia, Kansas City and Cleveland.

The comrades throughout the country are urged to rush all available funds immediately.

Send al funds to: **Jewish Propaganda Committee,** C. L. A. (Opposition)
% M. Lewit
84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y.

NANKING—November 8—(Fenprecor)
—Under the terms of a new conscription law passed by the government last month, 470,000 additional men will be added to the "Nationalist Army" each year for the next three, a total of 1,140,000 additions to the swollen total of men under arms in China who now exceed 3,000,000.

◆ ◆ ◆

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their own ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"—**Communist Manifesto.**

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MILITANT

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

The Black Shirt Dictatorship

The Problems of Revolutionary Struggle in Italy

◆◆◆

Italian fascism has recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its coming to power. At the end of October 1922, the fascist coup d'Etat gave the Italian bourgeoisie new means of exploiting and dominating the working masses. Since this time, the situation of the masses has grown continually worse. All their victories, the result of a half-century of struggle and sacrifice both on the political and the economic field, were swept away by brutality and violence.

What is the present situation in Italy? This is what an old comrade, recently returned from there, says:

"Unemployment is terrible. Among workers' families, there are few who have jobs. Relief amounts to nothing, and when the relief chest is empty, even those miserable payments are suspended. Small business is completely ruined. The wages of those who work are very low, and they talk of still further cuts. A large number of factories have been closed, with no improvement in sight. In the country, poverty is still worse. Poor markets and bad crops have finished the ruin of thousands of peasants who will not be able to pay even a part of their taxes this year. From all parts of Italy, the people are trying to emigrate. But where to? The frontiers, too, are closed . . ."

"Yes, but don't they try to get out of such a situation?"

"Everybody says we ought to get out of it, and everybody wants to get out of it, but how? That is not the problem. The right to complain is freely exercised everywhere. Nobody is satisfied with the regime. Only the other day, I attended a meeting of podestas (city authorities) of my province, where I heard speeches strongly criticising the central government. Then too, the language of the Pope in his famous encyclical is typical of the situation, in spite of the reconciliation which, inevitably, has come about since then. Openly, one can hear criticism of the regime. This is evidently a change from the situation just past. But—the government still strikes, and strikes hard. The blackjack is not suffering from unemployment. The fear of reprisals is still strong. Since the creation of the O. V. R. A., the fear of provocation has become an obsession in all social circles. But the most serious thing is the regime of isolation in which all of us live, at the factory, even at home.

The Difficulty In Spreading Information

"Suppose, for example, that somewhere in the factory some comrades stop work as a protest against some particular abuse. Do you think that we all know about it at once? Not at all. It is only a few days later that the whole factory knows what happened. If in some workmen's quarter the population has an encounter with the police force, and shots are fired, do you suppose the news circulates freely? It is only by chance that they will hear about it some days later in the other quarters, and then in confidence, because such events are kept in deepest silence. What shall we say then about things that happen in other cities, or in other parts of Italy? We in Italy know nothing about them. There were many things which happened there which I did not learn until I got here. Besides, the fascist press has not many readers. That is how a wormeaten regime like fascism, hated by the entire population, worn out by a tremendous economic crisis, can continue to live.

"But we have gone a long way since the time when the ruling class, after defeating and scattering the revolutionary forces, thought itself all-powerful. It sees once again that the ground is slipping from under its feet, and it is disturbed. Until yesterday, the only clandestine paper circulating in Italy was ours, that is to say, anti-fascist papers. There is another symptom of the situation. Italian fascism is on the downgrade. But in order to overthrow it, we must organize the activity of the masses, aroused and driven on by the deepening and broadening economic crisis."

"How do the masses, especially the working masses, look on the problem of the succession to fascism? Do they pose it as, Communism or Fascism?"

"Of course for us communists the question cannot be posed in any other way. For us the dilemma, fascism or communism, poses itself at once. But to say that this is the dilemma which poses itself before the working masses would be to deceive oneself grossly. I would say, rather, that the dilemma which poses itself presently before the masses is, Fascism or anti-fascism. On this question I have noticed your discussions with the "Center" and I foresee the objections which can be made against my statement.

The Issue: Fascism or Communism

"The objection will be made that we cannot talk of true anti-fascism without giving it a true class content, a proletarian content; that fascism is the special form of dictatorship of Italian capitalism under present conditions of its evolution; that to overthrow fascism is therefore to overthrow capitalism, so that the dilemma, fascism or anti-fascism, has no other meaning in practice than the dilemma, fascism or communism.

"All this is correct and perfectly clear for us communists. But it must be made just as correct and clear for the masses, and we have not yet gotten so far. The masses have not yet followed the entire process with understanding. The daily news of the Special Tribunal increases every day the general sympathy for the Communists; but we must realize that today everything which goes against fascism has likewise the sympathy of the masses. The task before us, Communists, especially at the present time, is not to turn our backs to the anti-fascist aspirations of the masses; it is to prove to them by our everyday activities that only the proletarian solution offers a way out of the present crisis and a guarantee against the return of fascism. This task demands of us a flexible tactic, capable of bringing us closer to the masses and taking them away from the influence of the bourgeois anti-fascist parties, whose hold, even among the working class, it would be childish to deny.

"The activities of these parties, on the contrary, are the more dangerous to us because they pose before the masses aims which seem to them easier to attain; so that in the last analysis they act as a brake on the revolutionary forces. All this is elementary. Is it not also the lesson of the events in Spain?"

Lessons From Various Countries

We think so. If it is true that the revolutionary Spanish workers must never forget our Italian experience of 1919-20, and must cut off the road to any true fascist dictatorship by accomplishing the tasks which the Spanish revolution puts before them (expropriation of the bourgeoisie, installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat), it is also true that the Italian Communists must learn the lesson of the events in Spain. Whether it is Italy or Spain or Germany, only the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian revolution, can guarantee the workers against a fascist dictatorship. But the proletariat can come out the victor only if the Communists know how to conduct a consistent revolutionary struggle, combining the struggle for immediate economic and political demands with the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

This does not mean in any way that we must combine Communism and democracy. For the rule of capitalism cannot be overthrown by any kind of transformation in the field of democraitc politics, but only through the proletarain insurrection.

Paris, November 7, 1931

—FEROCI.

ENGLAND AT THE CROSS-ROADS

It is proposed, in this and in following articles, to examine briefly the situation in Great Britain. In this way we can best get some understanding of the English situation and formulate a policy upon which the Left Opposition can work and can develop its activities.

Clearly, the basic consideration must be the changed position of Britain in the world market. The period of imperialism is also the period of capitalist decline. The intensification of industry; the growth of the productive forces far beyond the bounds of the narrow property rights and national boundaries—these factors make for increased imperialist rivalry, for war, for collapse and crisis; and for revolution.

Britain's old monopolist position disappears; its financial and trade supremacy are affected by new and strong rivals; its colonies, no longer passive recipients of Britain's products or willing slaves for the exploiters, are in revolt: even the necessary reorganization of its industries is held up by a host of conflicting property rights, small factors of production and parasitic interests.

Paradoxically enough, while Britain's power has been declining and her basic industries fighting a losing battle, the bourgeoisie have intrenched themselves. By their financial policy; by the extension of profitable industries in the colonies; by their monopolist control of certain commodities enabling them to maintain high prices; and by certain rapidly developed light industries, sections of the bourgeoisie have been able to make high profits. But since their position in the world market is based upon the heavy industries, upon coal, iron and steel, textiles and engineering, the actual position of Britain has been worsened. The real effects of this decline are to be seen in the weakening of Britain's position on the world market and the increasing unemployment among the bulk of her working population.

Coming on top of the long years of industrial depression the world crisis has hit Britain severely, although she is still protected in some directions by monopoly. The chief results can be seen in the following figures:

	Exports 1929	1930	1931	Per Cent of 1929
Manufactured Goods	430	343	221	—35.6%
Total (All Goods)	543	441	292	—33.7%

	Production 1929	(1929 Equal 100) 1930	1931 1st Quarter	2nd Quarter
All Industry	112	103	95	92
Mines	97	91	95	92
Iron and Steel	114	88	68	63
Engineering	121	117	102	100

The above table is even more significant when we realize that 1924 production was about 10% below the 1913 level.

In the past the return from overseas tribute has been sufficient to make up the balance between imports and exports and to leave a surplus for reinvestment overseas. The following figures show the amount available for overseas investment:

(Million) 1924	1928	1930
86	137	39

It is estimated that this year there will be an actual deficit of some 60 million.

Many factors are necessarily ignored or passed over in the above sketch, but in general the position should be quite clear: the decline is a real and permanent thing and not a passing phase to be ignored or treated by superficial remedies.

The Changed Political Outlook

The changed economic situation has brought about a change in the political attitude of the ruling class. Benificent liberalism is abandoned for "die-hardism": capitalism ceases to give and commences to take away: democratic forms begin to give way to more effective dictatorial measures—Emergency Powers Act, Orders In Council and the suppression of the militant workers' movements. The unemployed benefits, wrested from the bourgeoisie by the power of the working class, is reduced; wages are attached; expenditures on health, education, schemes of work and so on, are cut down ruthlessly. Tariffs are proposed, bringing dearer food; taxes imposed and the possibility of inflation threaten the upper strata of the proletariat and the petit-bouregoisie with very much worsened conditions. Here and in other spheres of social life is the political expression of the economic decline of Britain.

In such conditions, the working class movement cannot go on in the old way. The basis for the old trade union bargaining is gone; no longer is it quite safe for the unions to operate on the sphere of wages and conditions; in the period of capitalist decline, wage reductions become imperative and necessary for the maintenance of capitalist profits. Resistance to wage reductions or attempts at wage increases is no longer an attempt to secure a share of the margin left over after all interests are satisfied but an attack upon "fixed charges". Industries are declared "incapable" of paying the old wage standards: to challenge this is to challenge the whole basis of the capitalist control of industry.

The trade unions cannot, in the present period, remain in the centre: more and more are they forced to fight on political issues, and to choose either to become part of the machinery of the State or to advance to revolutionary struggle. The old sectional methods of struggle are useless in the face of modern conditions.

These conditions have, in every country in the world, given rise to the revolutionary movement. The old movements, built up under the old conditions, reveal their inability to adapt themselves to the needs of the present time. Today it is not sectional struggles but mass struggle; not national movements but international movements.

In England, as elsewhere, the economic conditions are ripe for revolution. Is there the necessary readiness on the part of the proletariat and the necessary break-up of the ruling class groups and the weakening of its hold upon the middle classes to make a political revolution possible? What are the immediate perspectives?

In our next article we shall try and deal with these points.

ANGLICUS.

THE MILITANT

Published weekly by the Communist League of America [Opposition] at 84 East 10th St., N. Y.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Martin Abern James P. Cannon
Max Shachtman Maurice Spector
Arne Swabeck

Entered as second class mail matter November 28, 1928 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Under the act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. IV, 35 (Whole No. 94)

Saturday, DECEMBER 12, 1931

Subscription rate: $2.00 per year; foreign $2.50. Five cents per copy. Bundle rates, 3 cents per copy

Perspectives of the Crisis in France

Economic - Social Changes and Prospects

◆◆◆

The world-wide crisis of capitalism which began to manifest itself in the United States in July, 1929, did not seriously affect French economy until the latter part of 1930. At the present time, with a false dawn of recovery appearing in England on account of inflation, and in a few partial and temporary manifestations in the United States, the trend in France continues downward. What is the likelihood that the crisis in France may continue to grow deeper and sharper, even in the face of the beginnings of an industrial upturn elsewhere? The survival or partial stabilization of capitalist economy in the United States, in England and in Germany has been based on attacks on the standard of living of the workers, whose resistance has on the whole been limited and sporadic. In France the problem has not been posed in its full forms because of the delay in the outbreak of the crisis, but already the strikes in the textile, and metallurgical industries indicate a high degree of militancy among the rank and file. A further sharpening of the crisis and an attempt on the part of the French bourgeoisie to solve it from the backs of the workers will lead to an intensification of the class struggle on the economic field which is bound to have its effect on political developments at a time like this when the French C. P. has already indicated that it acknowledges the need for a turn to regain the confidence of the masses. The following study attempts to outline the economic background of the present stage in the crisis and to indicate some probable perspectives.

The approach to its conclusions can be outlined as follows:

1. French industrial capitalism, because of the historical conditions under which it arose, has met with more resistance from other sections of the bourgeoisie than capitalism in other countries. As a result, capitalism has not matured its basic contradidctions in France to the same extent as in certain other advanced countries, and is therefore not so susceptible to the immediate effects of a crisis.

2. This does not mean that French capitalism occupies an "exceptional" position, but merely that its tempo of develoment has lagged behind that of capitalism elsewhere. The broad line of development has been similar: increasing displacement of agriculture, increasing concentration, increasing development of export markets, before and since the war.

3. The specific circumstances surrounding the post-war crisis of capitalism in France made it possible to postpone bringing into the open the internal class conflicts of French capitalism, against the proletariat on the one hand, against the petty peasantry and the financial oligarchy on the other.

4. This period of truce is now coming to an end: the questions of bringing down the cost of living at the expense of French agriculture, of cutting wages in the interests of export competition at the expense of French labor, and of bringing finance capital into its normal relation as advance agent and leader in the concentration of industry into monopoly, and the development of export markets through the export of finance capital, will break down the unstable equilibrium of the past four years, praised by bourgeois economists as the "harmony, the balance, the sense of measure of France". This unstable equilibrium has been based on the protection of an inefficient agriculture against indudstry; on the limitation of industry to little more than the restricted home market based on small-scale industry and agriculture; and on the development of a powerful financial oligarchy on a relatively narrow industrial base. These three policies are contrary to the iron necessities of capitalism—primitive accumulation through the displacement of the peasant by the proletarian; expansion of production and the consequent necessity of a world market; and a hegemony of finance capital based on the interweaving of its interests with those of a concentrated and monopolistic industry, instead of a finance capital chiefly concerned with non-"productive" and non-industrial operations such as short-term credits to foreign banks, Stock Exchange operations, and loans to foreign governments. The industrial bourgeoisie can make its peace with finance capital, but sooner or later with the intensification of the general post-war crisis of captalism, it will have to come into open conflict with the peasantry, which can find an ultimate solution only in the alliance of the latter with the proletariat.

Relative Mildness of the French Crisis in 1930, Increasing Sharpness in 1931

Only a few data are necessary to bring out the relative lateness of the manifestations of the crisis in France. Steel production in 1930 declined 3.1% compared with the previous year in France; 35% in Germany, 37% in the United States, 21% for the whole world. Prices advanced, the index of the cost of living for Paris rising from 556 in 1929 to 581 for 1930, while prices were falling all over the world. The cost of new capital, indicated by the yields of new securities offered to the public, declined from 5.36% in 1929 to 4.69% in 1930, indicating the abundance of capital and the confidence of the bourgeoisie. Bankruptcies showed only a small increase, from a monthly average of 508 in 1929 to an average 521 in 1930. In foreign trade, imports showed a small increase from 59,461,000 tons in 1929 to 60,759,000 tons in 1930, while exports decreased somewhat from 39,906,000 tons in 1929 to 36,759,000 tons in 1930.

In the course of 1931, the picture has changed considerably, and the tendency is still rapidly downward. Steel production in September, 1931 was 654,000 tons against 680,000 in August 1931, 801,000 tons in January 1931 and an average of 783,000 tons for all 1930. Retail prices in October, 1931, were 571% of pre-war against 588% in the preceding month and 637% in October, 1930; wholesale prices dropped still faster, being 423% in October, 1931 against 437 in September and 519 in October of last year. The cost of new capital, which had declined as low as 4.10% by February of this year, has been rising steadily—4.60% in June and July, 4. 75% in August, 5% in September. Bankruptcies amounted to 1,005 in October, 1931, nearly twice the monthly average of last year, against 675 in September, 1931. Foreign trade for the first eight months of 1931 has shown a sharp decline in exponts against the corresponding period of last year, in tonnage from 24,787,000 tons to 20,399,000, and in value from 29,309,000,000 francs to 20,970,000,000, while imports have fallen off relatively little in tonnage from 40,313,000 to 39,910,000

(Continued on page 2)

Economic Crisis Hits Workers of Greece

Dear Friends:

Since I last wrote to you the situation in our country has become worse. The fall of the English pound has disturbed the economic life and especially the exports of tobacco, raisins and olive oil. The income from the merchant fleet is reduced, while individuals and banks who had deposits in London lost tremendous sums. The State Bank alone lost 300,000 pounds, which reduced the paper drachma and put the stabilization of the Greek currency on the edge of the abyss. The state income from taxes is reduced by 60 million drachmas per month ($750,000), and it is forecast that the total deficit of the economic year will total 300 million drachmas. The Government is preparing to reduce the wages of the State employees by 6%, but it was met by unanimous protest from every side, so that action was deferred to December 15th in the expectation of an improvement of the world economic situation after the victory of the Tories in England.

Worsening of the Workers' Situation

The maintenance of the drachma at the stabilized level of 20% over English currency is followed by the reduction of industrial production and an attack of capital upon wages. Workers are willing to fight, but they are in an awful state of disorganization. The responsibility for that situation rests upon Stalinism, which for ten years by its errors and adventurism helped the reactionaries to take foot in the trade unions, and from an insignificant minority to seize the direction of the unions and the General Federation of Labor, with the assistance of dictator Pangalos. Instead of struggling against them to gain the confidence of the workers, the Stalinists withdrew from the G. F. L. and founded the Unionist G. F. L., which, through the policy of the Third Period—the general political strike and the like—became a mere skeleton. In the same period they dissolved the trade unions under their direction and amalgamated them into industrial unions. But at the stage of economic development in which our country was and still is this meant a suicide crime committed against the organization of the Greek workers. The Industrial Leather Union for years was unable to get together in meetings of more than 15 workers. For three years they did not hold elections for Council renewal. We have resisted this crime of Stalinism and in the midst of this struggle our best comrade Theodore Ladas, shoemaker-worker, was assassinated.

Our organization strived in this period to organize the workers and succeeded to have fifteen unions in Athens and Piraeus and ten in Salonica. But this was far from grouping the majority of the workers who are 90 per cent unorganized.

Trade Union Unity

It is natural that the slogan for unity should be at the heart of every worker, and when our organization put forward the slogan of the united front and later of unity, the response from the workers was unanimous.

In Athens there were two bakers' unions, one of which was under reactionary management, the other under ours. Under our pressure, workers obliged their leaders to accept the unity propagated by the Archio Marxists. The result was that we obtained the direction of the amalgamated union.

Our slogan for unity meets the stubborn resistance of Stalinists, who prefer to have lifeless unions instead of having the masses concentrated in them. In the past, when the Archio-Marxists became a majority in unions under the Stalinist regime, they (the Stalinists) expelled these majorities rather than to surrender the union control. That is the history of the great majority of the unions which are now under our direction. Our slogan for unity is: ONE UNION FOR EVERY INDUSTRY.

The only terms we propose are: proletarian democracy in the union and liberty for the factions.

We also propagated this slogan at the VI Congress of the General Federation of Labor, where Jouhaux of the French C. G. T. and of the Amsterdam International was in attendance. Our organization circulated a tract against this traitor. Two comrades were arrested and beaten up by the police who were protecting him.

In Piraeus there are three bakers' unions, one under our direction. In a common meeting, the workers accepted our slogan and a committee of fifteen was elected to carry out the fusion of the unions. In Athens, the same will take place with another bakers' union which was founded by the reactionaries, when our comrades were arrested at the beginning of a general bakers' strike.

Under our pressure, Stalinists made a turn accepting our slogans and declaring that they are prepared to accept a union Congress for the formation of ONE Confederation of Labor.

But in practice, they are putting up obstacles for every real effort for unity and are even collaborating with reactionaries against us. This was the case in the Bank Employees' Union, where Stalinists worked with reactionaries to defeat the Council composed of sympathizers to our organization. They did not succeed; we have retained our position in the Council.

International Labor Defense

Our participation in the I. L. D. groups continues, but we are met with all the obstacles that Stalinism is capable of. They took occasion to expel the entire I. L. D. group in the bakers' union which protested against the persecution of Rakovsky and Trotsky and the Bolshevik-Leninists of the Soviet Union. The Rakovsky campaign was very successful in bringing to the knowledge of the workers the situation of the Opposition in the U. S. S. R. The Stalinists have been enraged at this exposure, and they began a fierce campaign of calumniation against Trotsky and Rakovsky, whom they calumniated as counter-revolutionists. For the same reason, they expelled from the I. L. D. four of our best comrades who are in prison cells at Syngrow. Now they are preparing the expulsion of every Archio-Marxist from the I. L. D.

In Salonica prisons, exasperated by the criticism of our comrades in the prison, they rushed against them, twenty against five, and beat them fiercely. They attacked comrade Cavilla, then secretary of the Drama radio, and member of the district committee of East Macedonia and West Thrace, who lately joined our organization, after addressing an open letter to the members of the Party denouncing the crimes of the Stalinists, the thefts, treason, etc. They wounded him in the head with a rifle. Some days later our comrade was discovered and arrested by the police and imprisoned and tortured.

The Terror

The terror against the militant workers is increasing. The courts are dissolving workers' unions; they imprison, send to jail and deport for years. The foundation of new unions is forbidden. On August 1st the police arrested some of our comrades at Agrini and attached them to the tail of a horse which was galloping. In the shoemakers' strike, which now involves 4,000 workers in Athens and Piraeus, we have twenty comrades sentenced to years of prison. The secretary and president of the shoemakers' union (Archio-Marxist) were condemned to eight months' imprisonment. The comrade who was standard-bearer in a demonstration of strikers was sentenced to eighteen months in jail.

On November 7th at a demonstration in favor of the Russian Revolution, fourteen comrades, members of our organization, were condemned from two to three and a half years' imprisonment and exile. Among them are two working-women.

For a month now, 4,000 shoemakers are on strike in Athens and Piraeus. In this strike, Stalinism revealed its hideous face. We will give you an account of this strike in the near future after the strike ends.

Athens, November 12, 1931

-P. P.

EDITORIAL NOTES

ON WHICH SIDE?

The defense of workers under persecution by the state authorities of capitalism for their activity in the labor movement is a class question, and therefore a question of principle. It makes no difference what the opinions or affiliations of the prisoners may be. Blows directed against them are in reality directed against their class. In such an issue there are only two sides, and there is only one question to answer: On which side do you stand?

This questin of principle is now coming to the front most insistently in the case of Soderberg, Bunker, and Trajer, the members of the Independent Tidewater Boatmens Union, who have been selected for victimization in the New York "dynamite plot". In reality the frame-up is directed against their union, and by that fact, against the entire working class. The members of the I. T. B. U. have not been deceived by the attempt to pass off the frame-up as a prosecution of individual "criminals". The union has already taken a decided stand on the case. It has recognized that the fight against the frame-up is a fight for its own existence as an organization and has made the defense of Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer its own. The question now presents itself categorically: For the boat owners, the police, and the agent provocateur on the one side—or, for the Tidewater Boatmens Union and its persecuted members on the other. An ordinary trade union militant who has been through a few fights with the boss class, to say nothing of an enlightened class conscious worker, should have no difficulty in deciding where he stands.

As in all anti-labor frame-ups of the past there is a great deal of police propaganda being carried on to becloud the issue and confuse the workers. This propaganda has its unconscious mouthpieces in the labor movement. In the early days of the Mooney case and also in the Sacco-Vanzetti case we saw the same thing. People who are naive enough to believe anything they are told by the frame-up gang withhold their help from the defense, And to these deceived ones must be added those who slander the prisoners at the time of their greatest need in order to cover up and justify their own treachery and cowardice. One of the first tasks in defending workres in a case of this kind is to tear the mask from the face of these camouflaged police agents and show them up in their true light before the workers.

The people who went around whispering that Mooney and Billings were really "guilty", and who did the same thing in regard to Sacco and Vanzetti when the case first broke, have their counterparts in the case of the marine workers now facing trial. This treacherous propaganda was strongest at the moment when the prisoners were first arrested and put through the torture of the third degree, when they appeared to be alone and friendless with no one to speak for them or to help them. But since the defense movement began to take shape, and the union rallied its forces for the fight, the voluntary helpers of the prosecution have begun to beat a retreat. This process will be accelerated as the issue is brought clearly into the open and the honest workers rally around the banner of labor solidarity.

In a previous issue we called attention to the abominable statement of the **Daily Worker** on the case—the statement poisoned with the spirit of class treachery. Some elements in the I. W. W., whose aim in life is to demonstrate on every occasion that they are just as rotten as the Stalinist bureaucrats, brought out a statement of the same character in the Dec. 1st issue of **Industrial Solidarity.** But this brought a reaction from the I. W. W. members in New York which is worthy of emulation by the Communist workers in the ranks of the party. Here is a copy of a telegram sent to **Industrial Solidarity:**

"Membership here demands retraction of article signed H. R. pertaining to victims on water front in recent "Solidarity". Soderberg, Trajer, and Bunker, have pleaded not guilty. We consider accusation against them an injustice. Non-I. W. W. marine workers defense committee defending cases should be given support. Letter from victims follows. L. J. Seco, General Executive Board Member."

We also know of the protests that have been made by Party members along the same line against the position taken by the **Daily Worker.** These are signs that the rank and file militants are going to say their word on this case and that it is going to be in favor of the defendants and not of the prosecution. This is the hope of the imprisoned members of the boatmens union in their desperate trouble. It is also the hope of the militant labor movement.

THE OPPOSITION ON THE EVE OF GREAT ADVANCES

In the beginning of the year that is now drawing to a close the Communist League began an upward swing under the sign of a planned program of expansion. The plan worked out in almost every detail. The reestablishment of the weekly **Militant,** the organization of our publishing house, the strengthening of full-time staff, the publication of the **International** in English, the placing of organizers in the field, and the national lecture tour—all these projects of the plan are today a reality. And as a result of these achievements the American section of the Opposition is not exactly the same as it was a year ago—it is stronger in organization, more fortified in principle and more confident of its future. Only one item of the expansion program remains unfulfilled—the theoretical magazine. Our failure by approximately five hundred dollars to collect the estimated two hundred dollar fund compelled us to cross the project off for the time being. In all other respects the program was realized.

In the meantime new developments and new advances—the fruit of our systematic planed work of the year—are crowding upon us unannounced and urging a reorientation of our work with a still broader and more optimistic perspective. The planned program of expansion, besides attaining its immediate objectives, is already beginning to bear fruit in tangible advances which were not planned, nor even hoped for in so short a time. A number of new achievements, which were not directly contemplated, confront us now as imminent realities.

The first of these—first chronologically and first in importance and significance—was the establishment of **Young Spartacus,** the voice of the Opposition youth, the first youth paper to make its appearance in the entire international organization of the Left Opposition. The founding of **Young Spartacus,** and simultaneously with it the organization of the Marxian Youth Club under the aegis of the Opposition—there are the true signs of the invincible vitality of the Marxist wing of the movement.

To this will soon be added two more evidences of Opposition progress in other fields. The 15th of December will mark the first appearance of **Communistes,** official organ of the Communist League in the Greek language; and following that, the publication of a Jewish paper is scheduled for January 1st. The enormous significance of these two events needs no elucidation. They are the first concrete indications of the slow but steady growth of our influence among the foreign language elements of the Communist movement. The roots of our movement are spreading wide and going deep. In all these developments we see the proof that the conditions are maturing for a transformation of the form and character of our organization. There is reason to believe that we are on the way toward breaking out of the narrow confines of a purely propaganda body. At any rate we are moving in that direction. That is what these events foreshadow.

But we must see the whole picture, which is by no means a one-sidedly optimistic one. These expanded activities in themselves involve the organization in a crisis which expresses itself most acutely on the financial side. It is a crisis of growth, to be sure, but it effects our work most seriously at the moment just the same. The new advances are well grounded in all the circumstances. They cannot be postponed. But they also impose additional burdens and responsibilities on the still limited number of our supporters. These obligations cannot be postponed either. Everything depends upon our comrades understanding this and meeting it with the necessary additional activity and sacrifice.

—J. P. C.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

"What Constitutes A Revolutionary Situation?" by **Leon Trotsky.**

The Situation in Germany—A Dangerous Strategic Error of the Communist Party—by Erwin Bauer.

Many other special features on events in the American and International labor and Communist movement.

Every intelligent and class-conscious worker wishes to be fully informed on working class developments. **The Militant** is the best English paper for that purpose. Read and subscribe to **The Militant.**

EXPIRATION OF SUBSCRIPTION

If the number of your wrapper is 93 or under, your subscription has expired. To ensure that you do not miss a single issue of **The Militant,** send in your **renewal** immediately to **The Militant,** 84 East 10th St., New York, N. Y.

Read! Subscribe!

TO

Young Spartacus

Published by the National Youth Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition)

YOUNG SPARTACUS

84 East 10th Street New York, N. Y.

Enclosed please find fifty ($0.50) cents for one year's subscription:

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

Tasks of the Left Opposition in England and India

- Some Critical Remarks on an Unsuccessful Thesis -

Two comrades, Ridley and Chandu Ram, have worked out theses dedicated to the situation in England, the Left Opposition, and its relations to the Comintern. The authors consider themselves supporters of the Left Opposition despite their having serious differences with it. In their document they defend several times, the necessity of an open and free inner criticism. That is absolutely correct. This free and open criticism we will employ, therefore, in relation to their own theses.

1. "Great Britain is at the present time in a transitional phase between Democracy and Fascism". Democracy and Fascism are here considered as two abstractions without any social determinants. Evidently, the authors wish to say: British Imperialism prepares itself to free her dictatorship from the decomposing parliamentary covering, and to enter upon the path of open and naked violence. In general this is true, but only in general. The present government is not an "Anti-Parliamentary" Government; on the contrary, it has received an unheard of parliamentary support from the "nation". Only the increase of the revolutionary movement in England can force the government to tread the path of naked, ultra-parliamentary violence. This will without doubt take place. But at the present time this is not so. To place today the question of **Fascism** on the first plane is not here motivated. Even from the standpoint of a distant perspective one can doubt in what measure it is in place to speak of "Fascism" for England. Marxists must, in our opinion, proceed from the idea that fascism represents a different and specific form of the dictatorship of finance-capital, but it is absolutely not identical with the imperialist dictatorship as such. When the "Party" of Mosely and the "Guild of St. Michael" represent the beginnings of fascism, as the thesis declares, it is precisely the total futility of both named groups that shows how unwise it is to reduce already today the whole perspective to the imminent coming of fascism.

The Kerensky Period for Great Britain

In the analysis of the present situation in England, we should not preclude the variants through which the rule of conservatism will pass, not directly to the dictatorship of open violence, but will put forward, as a result of a swift parliamentary dislocation to the Left, through any block of Henderson and Lloyd George, a transitory government of the British Kerenskiade. Lloyd George counts, manifestly, on the inevitable Left turn, of "open opinion", and, precisely, therefore, does not fear to remain today in a futile minority.* In what degree the British Kerenskiade is probable, how durable it will be, etc., depends on the further development of the economic crisis, on the tempo of the bankruptcy of the "national" government, and, mainly, upon the speed of the radicalization of the masses.

Obviously, the Kerenskiade, when it appears, must for its own part, uncover its insufficiency and consequently push the bourgeoisie along the road of open and naked violence. In this case, the English workers must convince themselves that their Monarchy is not just an innocent and decorative institution: the King's power will inevitably become the center of the united imperialist counter-revolution.

2. A profound error is to be found in the second paragraph, directed against the activity in the trade unions, with the object of their capture, which for a Marxist and Bolshevik is obligatory. According to the thought of the thesis, the trade unions from their origin represent "imperialist organizations". They can live so long as they benefit by the super-profits of British capitalism; now, when her privileged position is forever lost, the trade unions can only disappear. To struggle to capture the present trade unions is nonsense. The revolutionary dictatorship will, in the proper time build new "economic organizations".

The British Trade Unions—Their Past and Future

In this judgment there is nothing new. It renews long ago clarified and rejected propositions. The trade unions are not considered by the authors as the **historic organization** of the British proletariat, which reflects its destiny, but as a creation which from its inception is penetrated with the sin of imperialism. But the trade unions have had their rich and instructive history. They had previously carried on a heroic struggle for the right to organization. They gloriously participated in the Chartist Movement. They led the struggle for the shorter working day, and these struggles were recognized by Marx and Engels as having great historical importance. A number of trade unions entered the First International. Alas, history does not exist for our authors. In all their opinions, there is not a drop of dialectics. They limit themselves under metaphysical principles: "Fascism", "Democracy", "Imperialistic organizations". To the living and real processes they oppose their discoveries.

We hear from them that the leaders of the trade unions did not betray the General Strike of 1926: To acknowledge them as "betrayers" would indicate to acknowledge that they were previously "revolutionary". See what kind of a Derby Metaphysics runs. The reformists have not always betrayed the workers. In certain periods and under certain conditions, the reformists carired through *some progressive work,* insufficient though it be. The epoch of imperialist decline snatches the bottom from under the reformists. That is why the reformists, insofar as they are forced to attach themselves to the movement of the *masses, betray it at a certain stage.* Even so, the masses accept the conduct of the reformists. To this living conception of the masses, the authors oppose the theory of the original sin of the trade unions. This theory is remarkable in that it does not allow a betrayer to be called a betrayer.

The Road of the Workers Toward Revolution

Since 1920, the trade unions have lost more than 40% of their membership. The authors, therefore, say that in the course of the next two years they will lose another 40%. When these 80% of workers come to Communism, comrades Ridley and Ram can say: the prophet need not go to the mountain when the mountain comes to the prophet. But insofar as we know, this is not so. Ridley and Ram have not a dozen workers behind them. The trade unions still embrace millions of workers who in 1926 demonstrated that they are capable of carrying on a revolutionary struggle. We must look for the workers where they are to be found today, and not where they may be tomorrow—the organized as well as the unorganized. The question does not go so far as the economic organizations which the future revolutionary dictatorship will create, but rather to the present English worker, without whom to speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies playing with phrases.

Can in reality the workers enter the path of the insurrection in one leap, without in the preceding period deepening its struggle against capitalism, without radicalizing themselves, their methods of struggle and their organizations? How can the revolutionization of the working-class take place outside of the trade unions, without reflecting itself inside of the trade unions, without changing its physiognomy, and failing to call forth a selection of new leaders? If it is true, that the trade unions originated on the fundamentals of the capitalist super-profits of Great Britain—and this is so **to a limited degree**—so, must the destruction of the super-profits radicalize the trade unions, understood, of course, from below and not from above, understood in the struggle against the leaders and traditions. This struggle will be all the more successful if the Communists participate in it.

The authors of the thesis go so far as to identify the struggle for the trade unions with the Anglo-Russian Committee. An overwhelming argument! The Left Opposition accused Stalin, Tomsky and Company that through the political friendship with Citrine, Purcell, Cook, et al, the Communists in the trade unions were hindered from unmasking these traitors. Comrades Ridley and Ram bring forth a new discovery: To unite with the betrayers and to unmask them before the masses—are one and the same thing. Can we take such arguments seriously?

Lenin's Dictum: Work In All Labor Organizations

The American comrade, Glotzer, in speaking of the necessity of working in the trade union organizations for their conquest, appeals in absolute correctness to the pamphlet of Lenin's: "Infantile Sickness of Communism—Leftism". To this comrades Ridley and Ram answer with four objections:

(a) They ask for arguments and not appeals to authorities. This is true. But the pamphlet of Lenin's contains many arguments which their thesis entirely fails to answer.

(b) The authors deny Roman Catholic dogmas of infallibility. We agree with that. But we counsel them to begin with a criticism of the infallibility of their own gospel.

(c) "Lenin was neither God nor an infallible Pope!" This is a repetition of the preceding argument. Without a Pope, Lenin successfully struggled against Metaphysics and sectarianism.

(d) Lenin wrote in the year 1920; the situation since then has changed considerably. But the authors abstain from explaining in what these changes really consist, aside from considering their allusion to the diminishing membership of the trade unons, which does not have a decisive significance.

We see that the arguments of the authors have an extremely abstract and even a purely formal character. The allusion to the year 1920 is in direct opposition to the fundamental thoughts of the thesis. If the trade unions from their origin were and remain to this day pure imperialist organizations incapable of revolutionary deeds, the allusion to the year 1920 loses all significance. We would have to say simply that the attitude of Marx, Engels and Lenin was false to the roots.

The Left Opposition and the Comintern

(3) The third paragraph is dedicated to the Comintern. The authors stand for the creation of a 4th International, and, here too, manifest the fundamental quality of their thoughts: absolute metaphysics. We reply that Engels, after Hegel, understood metaphysics as considering phenomenon, fact, power, tendencies, etc., as unchangeable substances, and not as developing processes and, therefore, developing in constant contradictions. If the trade union is a vicious imperialist substance from below to above, in all epochs and periods, so likewise the Comintern is for our innovators a vicious bureaucratic substance. The inner processes of the Comintern, the inevitable contradiction between the masses of members and the bueaucratic apparatus, are entirely left out of consideration in their calculations. The authors ask us: Do we believe that the bureaucracy under the influence of our thesis will surrender their interests? And is such a supposition to be described as idealism or materialism?, inquire further Ridley and Ram with inimitable irony, not observing that their own posing of the question must be characterized as lifeless metaphysics.

The bureaucracy is very strong, but it is certainly not as omnipotent as Ridley and Ram believe. In the U. S. S. R., the sharpening contradictions of the economic development pose ever more before the millions of members of the Party and Youth, the fundamental questions of program and tactics. Insofar as the bureaucrats will not be able to solve these contradictions, the millions of Communists and young Communists will be forced independently to think of their solution. To these masses we say today, and we will say tomorrow: "The Centrist bureaucracy conquered the apparatus of the Party, thanks to certain historic conditions. But you, worker-Communists, hold to the Party, not in the name of the bureaucrats but in the name of its great revolutionary past and its possible revolutionary future. We understand you fully. The revolutionary workers do not leap from organization to organization with lightness, as individual students. We Bolsheviks-Leninists are fully ready to help you worker-Communists regenerate the Party".

Supporting the German Communist Party are millions of workers. The catastrophic crisis in Germany places before it revolutionary problems as problems of life or death. On this ground without doubt will develop a deeper and deeper ideological struggle in the Party. If the few hundred Left Oppositionists remain on the side, they will become transformed into a powerless, lamentable sect. If, however, they participate in the inner ideological struggles of the Party, of which they remain an integral part despite all expulsions, they will win an enormous influence among the proletarian kernel of the Party.

The British Communist Party

No; the Left Opposition has no reason to tread the path which Ridley and Ram call for. Within the Comintern—even when one does not consider the U. S. S. R.—are to be found tens of thousands of workers who have lived through serious experiences through a whole stream of disillusionments, and are forced to search for correct answers to all fundamental questions of politics. We must approach these workers and not turn our backs to them. It would be very sad if the critical members of the official British Communist Party would imagine that the opinions of Ridley and Ram represent the opinions of the Left Opposition.

(4) The authors of the thesis accuse the Left Opposition, especially the American League, of "absurdly over-rating" the importance of the British Communist Party. In no way do we over-rate its importance. The last elections sufficiently, clearly and openly exhibited the weakness of the British Communist Party.** But the Left Opposition in Great Britain is today many hundred times weaker than this weak party. Ram and Ridley have as yet nothing. Supporting them are nobody but individuals who are not bound up with the struggle of the proletariat. Have they really attempted to draw an honest criticism of the Party? Where is their activity? Where are their program theses? Have they held discussions with the rank and file of the Party? Have they tried to convert them and win them to their support? Have Ram and Ridley, out of the 70,000 voters for the official Party, 700 or even 70 supporters? But in spite of this they are ready to organize the 4th International: The proletariat must believe in them implicitly—by credit, that they are really capable of building an International and to lead it.

The entire posing of the question is absolutely wrong. To this we must add that if the Left Opposition entertained this pernicious error and decided to create today a 4th International, comrades Ridley and Ram, who differ with us on all fundamental questions, must openly and immediately build a 5th International.

The Movement In India

(5) The paragraph which concerns itself with India, also suffers an extraordinary abstraction. It is absolutely indisputable that India can accomplish its full national independence only through a really great revolution which will put in power the Indian proletariat. Another path of development is imaginable only, in this case, if the proletarian revolution in England comes to victory prior to the revolution in India. In such an event, the national liberation of India would come before—one must suppose for a short time only—the dictatorship of the proletariat, uniting around it the poor peasantry. But from these perspectives, which are absolutely correct, it is still a long way to affirm that India is already ripe for the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the Indian proletariat have outlived their conciliatory illusions, etc. No; before Indian Communism stands a not yet nearly begun tack. The Bolshevik-Leninists in India must accomplish an immense, tenacious, daily and difficult work. One must penetrate into all organizations of the working-class. One must educate the first cadres of worker-Communists. One must participate in the daily, "prosaic" life of the workers and their organizations. One must study the relations existing between the cities and the rural districts.

First Tasks First

To fulfill such a work, naturally, programmatical and tactical theses are necessary. But it would be incorrect to begin to work with the convocation of an international conference over the question of India, as our authors propose. A conference without sufficient preparation will produce nothing. If the Indian Left Oppositionists will occupy themselves with the selection of recent material and working it up, or at least translate it into one of the European languages (strikes, demonstrations, centers of the peasant movement, the parties and the political groups of the different classes, the activity of the Comintern, its appeals and slogans), they will, with such an important work, greatly facilitate the possibility of a collective elaboration of the program and tactics of the proletarian vanguard in India.

One must begin with the building of a serious nucleus of the Left Opposition of Indian comrades, who really stand upon the point of view of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

—L. TROTSKY.

Kadikoy, November 7, 1931

* I have just received the "Demission Letter" of Lloyd George to his parliamentary Party, which totally confirms this supposition.

** It is now necessary to repeat that the elections are not the only and precise measure of influence. In the struggles a real revolutionary Party always shows itself far more strongly than in parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, the statistics of the votes are a very worthwhile indication of the strength or weakness of political parties. Only an archists can ignore these indications.

Railroads in Wage Cut Drive

(Continued from page 1)

Seniority rights to older railroad men in the service are gradually being pushed aside. The manifesto points out that "technological changes, reducing total volume of employment, have limited seniority protection to fewer and fewer employees." Increased traffic cannot meet the situation. The employers would not even consider the mild proposal of the Brotherhoods for the adoption of federal legislation for retirement insurance and for elective workmen's compensation. Indeed, the employers will give nothing that they are not compelled to. Instead of the mild Brotherhood proposals, there must be a demand, linked with the struggle for the six hour day and 5 day week with no reduction in pay, for genuine unemployment insurance, paid for entirely by the railroad and other industries and by the government, and to be administered through labor's agencies.

To the plea of the Brotherhoods that the rights of the workers be preserved in the consolidation of the railroads that is going on apace, the Railway Employers' Executive gave a brusqe reply. President Willard stated that "the carrier presidents were not in complete accord on this question", and hence nothing could be done about the matter.

Labor Heads and Bosses Congratulate Each Other

It is a striking commentary that the union head, Robertson, could say, concerning the conferences, that there had been **"no encouragement that any action would be recommended or taken by railway managements to provide any substantial measure of relief** of the present intolerance conditions." **(Railway Age,** (11-28-31). But the railroad president, Mr. Willard could say that "the conferences had been carried on in a fine spirit of friendship and that the discussions had been wholly devoid of any unpleasantness." To which labor leader Robertson replied in kind in his letter to Mr. Willard: "You have listened courteously to our propositions and have discussed them to some extent. . . ." Thus our railroad Damon and Pythias. The exploiter of labor and the betrayer of labor have every reason to be cordidal to one another. It is not they who will receive 10 and 15% wage cuts.

Railroaders! Prepare For Struggle

Railroad men! Another betrayal is being prepared for you by your leaders. The further and final destruction of your unions, built by decades of militant struggles, is being prepared for you by the bosses, joined by the false leaders of labor. Your militant resistance is the only answer.

The rank and file must build their movements around the central slogan of the six hour day and five day week, without reduction in pay. It is the main slogan for the preservation of the union and union conditions and for meeting the burning needs of all railroad workers. The Minneapolis Railroad Council, built around this central slogan, leads the way. Learn from them; work with them; unite with them to build a movement for militant railroad unionism—one that will make it possible to drive the betrayers of labor out of your ranks. Unite the ranks of railroad labor. Prepare for struggle against the bosses!

—MARTIN ABERN.